



LOOT: HOW TO STEAL A FORTUNE
by Jude Watson

Louisiana Young Readers' Choice Nominee 2017
Grade 6-8

Submitted by Jessica Barrilleaux, Student Worker
State Library of Louisiana

Title: *Loot: How to Steal a Fortune*

Author: Jude Watson

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SUMMARY

March McQuinn and his father Alfie live a life most people can only dream about. Summer in Milan, winter in Spain, practicing cool spy skills instead of attending school... but there are problems too. March is often alone, left waiting for his father, a jewel thief, to complete his latest heist. Now the unthinkable has happened; surefooted Alfie has suspiciously fallen to his death during a heist, and Alfie thinks he is alone for good, that is, until he meets the twin sister he never knew he had. As if that's not enough shock all at once, the twins are then swept into the American foster care system where they discover a trail of clues left by Alfie, sending them on an adventure complete with an ominous prophesy, a seven million dollar prize, and villains that will put their skill as thieves to the test. This is a story full of twists and turns that will keep readers in suspense until the very end.

AUTHOR BIOGRAPHY

Jude Watson has loved books and reading since childhood. She majored in English in college and then worked as a high school teacher, advertiser, and editorial assistant in a New York publishing house before becoming a writer. Her work has won the National Book Award, and she also writes for young adults as Judy Blundell. She has lived all over the country but currently resides near Manhattan with her husband and daughter.

Biographical information taken from the author's website at

<http://judewatsonbooks.com/bio/>

Accessed 24 February 2016.

AWARDS

Chosen as Best Summer Read 2014 by Amazon, Kirkus Reviews, and the Los Angeles Times



ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Author website <http://judewatsonbooks.com/>

Author website <http://judyblundell.com/>

OTHER TITLES BY AUTHOR

The 39 Clues series (2008-present)

What I Saw and How I Lied (as Judy Blundell, 2008)

RELATED TITLES

The Thief by Megan Whalen Turner

The Doublecross: And Other Skills I Learned as a Superspy by Jackson Pearce

The Case of the Missing Moonstone by Jordan Stratford, illustrated by Kelly Murphy

Scarlett Undercover by Jennifer Latham

A Snicker of Magic by Natalie Lloyd

CLASSROOM CONNECTIONS

Math:

What could you buy with 7 million dollars? Develop a spending, saving, and investment plan. The following resource from PBS Kids may help:

<http://pbskids.org/itsmylife/money/managing/index.html>

Social Studies:

Thievery isn't encouraged, but do any of March's skills have positive applications? In what professions might he use them? Research professions at:

<https://kids.usa.gov/jobs/index.shtml> or, for older students,

<https://kids.usa.gov/teens/jobs/index.shtml>

Science:

Explore the science of gems and jewels:

<http://www.sciencekids.co.nz/sciencefacts/chemistry/diamond.html>

<http://science.nationalgeographic.com/science/earth/inside-the-earth/minerals-gems/>

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/earth/gemstone-primer.html>

Then, make your own crystals:

http://chemistry.about.com/cs/growingcrystals/a/aa012604.htm?utm_medium=social&utm_source=youtube&utm_campaign=cm-socialposting_aboutmain

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BHRFBKjqEvg>

Physical Education and Theater:

At Blue's performance in Amsterdam, March see Jules perform on the cloud swing using aerial silks. Read more about the activity in the following article and video from LSU, and discuss safety measure involved as well as the medium's ability to combine athleticism and performance. Ask students to give examples of how body movement can tell a story or express an emotion.

<http://www.lsu.edu/highlights/2010/04/silks.shtml>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ncE4NxMkS-c>

Technology:

Identity theft: Stolen items are not always concrete. Use the following activity to discuss the security of personal information.

http://www.oklahomamoneymatters.org/K-12/documents/ID_Theft_Activity.pdf

Language Arts:

Persuasive speaking and writing skills: Ask students to consider the following questions: Does theft conflict with morality? Are there any circumstances that make it acceptable? Consider the example of white collar crime vs. looting in a disaster situation as well as the many instances of theft in *Loot*. Then, divide students into two groups, asking each to argue a different side of the issue. The groups should spend some time writing a brief report or essay to organize their thoughts before joining together to debate the issue. Is there a clear winning side?

Vocabulary:

Aspirational
Bankruptcy
Caravan
Commuter

Eulogy
Guerilla
Incentive
Insomniac

Irritability
Per Diem
Picturesque
Pitfall

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

The following discussion questions provided by Scholastic, accessible at:

<http://www.scholastic.com/teachers/lesson-plan/discussion-questions-loot-jude-watson>.

Please answer each of the following questions and explain your reasoning with evidence from the text where appropriate.

1. March and Jules are twins, but they grew up separately. How do you think their lives were similar? How were they different?
2. If you had to put together a getaway bag, what would you pack in it? Why?
3. Would you rather be an apprentice to Blue or Alfie? Why?
4. Jules and March traveled to many places. What new place would you like to visit?
5. Why do you think Izzy, Darius, March, and Jules form such a strong bond? What things have you bonded over with your good friends?
6. Alfie always said, "If you're going to do something, don't do it stupid." What do you think he meant by this? Is this good advice?
7. Alfie warns against doing a job for revenge. Why might revenge jobs be a bad idea?
8. If you were Alfie, would you have separated March and Jules? Why or why not?
9. March learned many things from his father. Who do you learn the most from in your life?
10. March knows how to navigate airports and train stations, but does not know how to do normal things like follow rules and sit in a classroom. What do you see as the advantages and disadvantages to March's life on the go?

RELATED WEB SITES

Lost Treasure: The Tucker Cross

<http://coolinterestingstuff.com/lost-treasure-the-tucker-cross>

In the book they mention the heist of the Tucker Cross and how to this day no one knows where it is. This is a real heist and you can find pictures of the cross online.

The Life and Crimes of Doris Payne

<http://www.dorispaynefilm.com/dorispaynefilm.com/TRAILER.html>

The trailer for a documentary about a real jewel thief.

Top Ten World's Rarest & Most Valuable Gems

<http://www.discovery.com/tv-shows/game-of-stones/top-ten-rarest-gemstones/>

A slideshow from Discovery.com.

Foster/Adoptive Parenting Common Questions

<http://www.dss.state.la.us/index.cfm?md=pagebuilder&tmp=home&pid=195>

FAQs from Louisiana's Department of Children and Family Services